

Allen Homestead
Shrewsbury, Monmouth County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-228

HABS
NJ
13-SHREW
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS
N.J.
13-SHREW.
3-

Allen Homestead
Shrewsbury, Monmouth County, New Jersey

Owner: George Silver

Date of Erection: 1667

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone and
brick

Exterior walls - frame
construction, shingles

Interior walls - plaster

Inside and outside
chimneys

Roof - gambrel with dormers

Historical Data:

This house is almost as old as the settlement of Shrewsbury itself. Shrewsbury was settled in 1664 at a crossroad called the "Four Corners" at the meeting of the Eatontown Turnpike and the Tinton Falls and Rumson Neck Road. At this point a King's highway, laid out in 1685, crossed the corners. This house stands on the northwest corner of these intersecting roads.

To separate legend and tradition from history in connection with this dwelling is impossible. It is believed that the foundations were laid in 1667; who built it and who lived in it prior to the time it was purchased by the Allen family in 1812, is not known.

There are several legends of struggles and skirmishes which took place in and around the old house. There is a story of an English officer sent to spy upon a group of Colonial soldiers known to be stationed in the home, and of his being shot or bayoneted at the foot of the stairway.

Behind an old panel on the second floor has been found evidence that a youth called to bear arms against the British had secreted himself in order to escape his enemies.

Shrewsbury history relates that Tory refugees made several raids through the village. The Allen Homestead was the scene of their bloodiest deeds. A guard of twelve Virginia Continentals were quartered in the tavern for the protection of the village. Five refugees, learning of this, came up from Sandy Hook, secreted themselves in the graves of the churchyard on the opposite corner, and waited an opportunity to surprise the Continentals. The guards careless and unsuspecting of danger came from their tour of duties, stacked their arms in the north room of the lower floor, and sought relaxation in the shady grounds to the rear of the house. The Tories rushed the house and captured the arms. The Continentals hearing the noise, rushed back into the house. They were unarmed; one was pinned to the floor and died, two others received fatal wounds, and the remainder surrendered, being taken to New York and cast into one of the sugar prisons.

On June 14, 1814, Dr. Edmund Williams Allen and his bride moved into the home and the property remained in the Allen family until purchased from the last direct descendant of Dr. Allen by George Silver in 1927.

^{APRIL 17, 1914}
In the ~~spring of 1913~~ the house was badly damaged by fire and a store building adjoining it was completely destroyed. Almost as much destruction was wrought by water as was by fire, and the interior had to be almost rebuilt. Due to the good judgment of the owner and builder a successful repair job was done so that the house's ancient appearance was not destroyed.

All the doors of the house are mahogany, and the winding staircase which leads to the main hall has mahogany balusters and a mahogany handrail. All of the hardware is of the type made two hundred years ago. Some of this has been replaced by new of the same type as the old made by the local blacksmith shop.

Bibliography:

Article in the Asbury Park Shore Press
November 3, 1935

Article in the Red Bank Register
August 5, 1914

Material collected by George A. Delatash,
Survey Historian for Monmouth County

Walter C. Rutt
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.
District Officer

Rev. Jan. 25 '37 THW.